

RECKLESS RALPH'S  
DIME NOVEL ROUNDUP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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IF DREAMS WERE ONLY TRUE.

The Real Happy Hours Roundup.

For two weeks I had been busy putting things in shape at Green Willows, my farm in N.H., for the old place was to see a scene unduplicated in its history, or that of the town itself. To tell the truth, Rockingham, N.H. is not much of a town, although it still basks proudly in its honorable traditions, in spite of the fact that, today, it can hardly boast of a population of 400 inhabitants. However, it is in the heart of excellent farm country, and the old 150 acre farm, bordered on one side by the peaceful flowing Lamprey River, on another by a State Road-dense forests on the third, while the fourth touches that of my neighbor, Charlie Hobbs.

A little after two P.M., a strange car bearing Pennsylvania number plates, pulled into the yard. I walked out to see who it was, and immediately recognized my old friend, Bill Benners. There were seven in the car, and he introduced me to two lively chaps, the Smeltzer Brothers, Bob and Ed. Years ago, in my early trading days with other members, I had done some business with Bob, and he looked about as I thought he would. There was also Ed Leithhead of Ranch Romance fame-Charlie Austin-John McIntyre-and Charlie Taylor. Somehow or other they had bunched together and came in Ed Leithhead's car.



-- They must have had quite a long dusty trip and I quickly bade them run the car back of the barn, and get into their old clothes and roam around, in order to shake the dust out of their limbs.

"Green Willows is yours for the next few days, Boys" I said, "and there are some good scouts here who will be glad to show you, or get you anything you don't see. These boys from Philly laughed and said they guessed they would make out all right, and started to look around.

It was not long before another car hove into sight and it was our contingent from New York, which included the two famous writers, Irving S. Cobb and Gilbert Patten. There were also--Donald Wollheim--Fred P. Pitzer--Jimmy Madison--Bill Erbe--and Jimmy Knott. I had met none of these, but the boys from Philly fell all over them, and it was hardly necessary for me to do the honors as host, and introduce them. A little later, another car with N.Y. number plates, drove up bearing three others, who turned out to be: Charlie Bragin--Fred Orphal--and Herb Leitstein. It certainly beat all how these three groups had got together and bunched up, in order to come to our first round-up. There was Cooperation for you.

As I had expected with so many of the boys present, my wife had long before decided that the diningroom was out of the question. So my general man of all trades, Stormy Kennedy, an old Spanish War veteran, who do anything, from thread a needle to perform an operation for appendicitis, had built a mess shack with long benches, and it was here that the boys gathered around six o'clock, for roast beef--baked potatoes--squash--peas--johnnycake--coffee and apple pie, put put by Bill Ziotas, who used to be company cook, in my old outfit overseas.

We sat around until late into the night, telling of our experiences in dime novel hunting, and when I heard some of the lads mention: OLD GLORY's--SNAPS--BROADBRIM's--BEAGLE'S HALF DIME's--and others, which are too rare for me to ever hope to own, I began to think my collection of 1500 (more or less), which my



~~my neighbors think a marvelous collection, is a mere~~  
nothing. It is strange how some of these fellows can  
land into a strange city and spot something right  
off..Along about 1.30 A.M. some one started to sing,  
and soon the old rafters were resounding with all  
the songs we ever knew. Gradually we drifted off to  
sleep, and it was as quiet as a tomb until about 9  
A.M. the next day.

I was awakened by my wife who told me there was a  
telephone call for me. Hastily slipping into my clo-  
thes, I ran downstairs and picked up the receiver.

"Hello, hello" I yelled into the phone.

"Howdy, Pard", came back a voice with a delicious  
Western twang, "Am ah talking to Don Learnard ?"

"You sure are, Pal", I answered. "Who is this ?"

"This is W.C. Miller of San Antonio. I've got  
Edgarton from Houston-Bill McCafferty-Blakey from  
Dallas, and Brother Rose from my town, with me. How do  
you get up to your place, anyhow ?"

"You don't", I answered. "You stay right there until  
we come and get you. I've got half the Brotherhood  
up here, already, and they are dying to see you fel-  
lows from the Lone Star State. Hold your mustangs !  
We'll be right down. Just camp on the station plat-  
form for 15 minutes."

"Hokay-Hombre !"

When I told the rest of the gang, there was a wild  
scramble for the cars, and three of them were roaring  
soon, down the road towards town, all so nearly load-  
ed, I wondered where we would put the Lone Star lads  
when we got them. I ~~wasn't left long~~ in doubt, how-  
ever, as although these fellows had never met, they  
fairly mobbed the lads from Texas. Piling them all  
in somewhere, we started back, and soon, they were all  
mingling together with the rest of the gang.

While we had been away, a bunch had arrived from  
another direction. A gang had come by plane from  
clear across the country: Bill Keeling, Bert Couch,  
Pat Moran, and Bill Langwell, from Frisco; George  
Cordier and Ray Mengar from Los Angeles; and



Reischman, Jack Ball, Bill Krumbien, and Harry Hamilton, with Al Johannsen, the last five coming from Chicago in Johannsen's private plane. Al is taking a course in Aviation, at the University of Chicago, and has reached the final stages, because he landed his plane in the middle of the South Meadow, where there was a wide space with plenty of room for landing or taking off.

Neither the Chicago boys, nor the California lads had known each other were on the way, yet they had arrived within fifteen minutes of each other. There was another rousing feed at the cook shack, and all during the day, the brothers began to trickle in, by ones and twos. I saw my old pal, Ren Skinner from Pawtucket—our president, Reckless Ralph who came with Joe Potaski—C.B. Hamilton from down Maine who came up with Bill Burns and Condon, having picked up Capt. C.G. Mayo at the Portsmouth, N.H. Navy Yard, which is not in Portsmouth, N.H. at all, but is in Kittery, in the State of Maine; also Ralph Smith from Lawrence, Mass., right close by—George Barton from Lexington, Mass.,—Lenny Leichter from Brockton—Frankie Harris from Ashland, N.H.—March Bennett from Boston—Eli Messier from Woonsocket—Ray Caldwell from Lancaster, Pa.,—M.E. Harsh of Ithaca, N.Y.—and many others.

About this time, I decided to tag the boys, and as there was a burlap bag full of bright scarlet tags, out in the grain shed, I brought them out, and had each one use his fountain pen on his tag, and told him to wear it. With so many new faces and almost every State in the Union, represented, it was impossible to remember them at so short acquaintance. It made it much easier to walk up to a friendly looking fellow, grab his tag, and call him by his first name.

Another bunch arrived later in the afternoon, some by plane; others by Greyhound Busses, landing at the North Station in Boston, where they recognized the old familiar H.H. Brotherhood smile and soon became acquainted. They occupied nearly one whole B. & M. coach, and included: Georgie Beck—Lacey Irwin—Fred Singleton—J.D. Hardin—George French—A.J. Marks—Charlie Westbrook—Frankie Fries—Frankie Schott—Bob Frye—



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Bill Claggett-Arv. Dahlstedt-Eddie LeBlanc-Rollie Sawyer-Carl Linville-H.O. Rawson-P.C. Maroske-Tommy O'Connor-Del Love-Bill Bennett-J.P. Guinon-Hal Holmes-Buck Wilson-Ralph Adriari-Charlie Hartman-Lou Kohrt-Don Brewer-Bill Hurd-Bill Jaffray-George Sahr-and Ad Martin.

Then, to my surprise, who should stroll in, but a fine looking fellow, with a military mien, who addressed me in perfect English, and introduced himself as Captain Max Foret, from the Meurthe et Moselle, in France. I was overjoyed to see him. It brought back to me, a great many happy memories of my days overseas as a buck private in Uncle Sam's army. By the way, Brothers, I am the only buck private in the whole U.S. Army. That is what somebody told me. They had talked with many veterans. Every one of them, even those who appeared shell-shocked or half-witted, were sergeants, Lieutenants, captains, or what have you, but that I was the first one they had met, who had been a buck private all through the war.

I asked Le Capitaine how the little town of Boucq was getting along, which is in the heart of the Meurthe, and if they ever rebuilt Menil-la-Tour, Seichprey, and Beaumont. There among us, he found many a veteran of the Great War, and soon felt at home. He told us that he was on detached service for the French Government, and it was a happy coincidence that he had happened to be in this country while our roundup took place. He is one great scout and Joe Thibodeau, who sometimes chops wood for me, took to him, like a duck to a pond, as the captain had no difficulty in understanding his Canadian French. Joe, too had been overseas.

On the third day, we fairly got going. We had three ball games going at one time. There was a tug of war between the New York boys and the Philadelphia lads. Bragin set up a prize to the winning team, which was: Seven of any Frank Reade-Red, White & Blue-Beadle's Half Bine, and an Old Cap Collier.. The Philadelphia Boys won—but HOW? It was claimed that Bob



Smeltzer picked out the place and threw his coat down. They stretched the rope, and Bob was anchor man. After they had seesawed back and forth, the Philly men held firm and nothing could budge, but I happen to know that Bob had found a small stump and thrown his coat over it, then later looped his end around the stump. He swore me to secrecy and I did NOT tell, but now that it is all over, and you fellows are all home again, guess you can know now, and will have to gnash your teeth at those Philadelphia lads.

We went swimming in the river-pitched horse-shoes-and the bunch of Honorary Members: Tanner-Major Lillie-N.H. Rose-Col. Randolph-Vic Randolph-Col. Pearson-Irving Cobb-Tom Grant-Bill Giles-Gil Patten-Vaulta Parma-and Bill Benners, sort of supervised the whole thing.

One thing that took place made me gladder than anything else I did. My neighbor, Charlie Hobbs had always been an admirer of the Frank Merriwell stories. He read every one that came to his hands, and did everything to get hold of one. When he grew up and married, still staying on the farm that was left to him, he named his first boy Frank, after Frank Merriwell. Well, Charlie was around, and I took him up and introduced him to Burt L. Standish, whom he had never heard of, as Gil Patten. Honestly, I believe it was the gladdest moment of that lad's life, to think he met the originator of Frank Merriwell, who had heretofore existed for him, only after the word "By" on the Frank Merriwell books. Brother Patten is not the stiff, dignified personage that he had always pictured him, but is still at heart, a boy and a lover of baseball, Charlie's favorite game,

The place seemed strange to some of the lads from other parts of the country, and the Westerners, and especially those from Ohio and Texas, asked me if I really called Green Willows, a "farm".



It would be merely a "quarter" to them, and hardly that, but my feelings were not hurt. I told them that it was all I wanted to take care of, and the fences, stumps, plowing and turning over, kept me and my crew of hired men, busy as we cared to be. \*

I showed the bunch the "haunted mill", which is now a mere tumble shack. In its day, many a monarch of the forest has been sliced and quartered by the keen teeth of its large circular saw, and its boom, now long gone, has caught thousands of the longest logs that floated down the river. I then took them out at night to the marsh over which a will-o-the-wisp dances every night. (To tell the truth, I never saw one, but I had Joe Thibodeau, who can walk every foot of that marsh by night, go out with a flashlight and put it on. He did a good job, too.) They were all impressed and thrilled as we watched this spooky phenomena.

On the fifth day, we had a gigantic corn roast and barbecue, after which we sat around Indian style, and discussed plans for the future of the Brotherhood. We all pledged our support to keep our magazine going and to cooperate with our President, Reckless Ralph, in every way. We love our little brotherhood and our little monthly that keeps us together and decided not to let carelessness, lack of interest, or any lackadaisical manner, deter us from sending in our "buck apiece", each year. That is little enough if we could do the hard thankless work that Reckless Ralph has put in, and the difficulties he has had to meet. Someone suggested three cheers for our President, and we all rose and gave them; and the peaceful sheep, cattle, and horses must have wondered what that loud roar meant.

Our powwow lasted way into the night, and the next day, the bunch started breaking up and drifting back to their various homes. What a success it had been! When shall we all meet again?

LONG LIVE THE HAPPY HOURS BROTHERHOOD !

FIRST "NICK CARTER" STORY WAS ACCEPTED.

"I have always had my villains meet their just



deserts and virtue always triumphed. Now I am satisfied to give up fiction writing, and attend the flowers that grow about my home."

And in keeping with this sentiment, expressed a short time before his death, Eugene T. Sawyer, 78, last of a group of writers who thrilled the generation that preceded the jazz age, with adventures of Nick Carter, Buffalo Bill, and Diamond Dick, spent his last days here. Death came quietly to the spinner of blood-curdling tales, amid the flowers he loved.

Back in the seventies, eighties, and nineties, he was a prolific writer of the sensational school. The publishers at the time, employed several of these versatile writers, to satisfy the craving of the younger generation, for stories of the West and the thrilling detective yarns in which virtue always triumphed.

Born in Bangor, Me., Nov. 11, 1846, Sawyer went to California with his parents, via the Isthmus of Panama where they settled in San Jose, after spending a few months in San Francisco. After completing his schooling he turned his hand at many things, from rancher to druggist, and miner to newspaperman. In the newspaper field, he had considerable success, working on all the San Jose papers, and is credited with having been an excellent reporter. He eventually became a managing editor.

He established a weekly paper, but after a few months, he was bankrupt. Shortly after this, he became ill, and while on his sickbed, decided he would become a novelist. With that thought in mind, he turned out his first Nick Carter novel. Unlike most aspiring writers, his first novel was accepted and he was asked to write more. He continued his writing and turned out several similar stories, which sold like wildfire. In all, he wrote approximately 300 Nick Carter stories, with the demand at times, so great that he was averaging one a week, and each one contained about 50,000 words.

In 1872, he married Belle Moody, daughter of the pioneer flour miller in San Jose. She preceded him



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in death, by about three years. Since her death, her  
their daughter Mrs. Elva Sawyer Cureton, has kept house  
for him, while he has worked in his flower gardens  
about his little vine-covered cottage at No. 360 No.  
Sixteenth Street, which he built 37 years ago and in  
which he died recently from an attack of influenza.  
Besides his daughter, he is survived by one son, Louis,  
a rancher in San Benito County.

During the height of his literary career, story  
after story came from his facile pen. He got most en-  
joyment in writing about real characters he knew, in-  
cluding Col. W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) - J. B. Hickock (Wild  
Bill), and others famous in the West of old.

His literary efforts were concluded in 1921 with  
a history of Santa Clara County, except for occasion-  
al writing, which he did for local newspapers.

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BOOK HUNTING WITH RECKLESS.

By Eli A. Messier-Member No. 81

Did you ever go book hunting? Well, I have, and with  
a real guy and regular fellow to boot. It was in the  
big town of Worcester, Mass., and it was the first  
time I had ever stopped there, so, believe it or not, I  
saw something in the line of books, accompanied by  
our genial and loyal president. We first stopped at  
Kowalczyk Bros. (member No. 33), then three or four  
other book stores, before we stopped to partake of a  
genuine old-fashioned pie dinner in a swanky place,  
"you bettcha". Then we visited some more book places  
finally ending up at H. O. Rawson's (the Pen & Ink Man)  
in his book den. (Member No. 39), after what seemed to  
us, a walk of about ten miles; but it was worth it!

There we saw more real artists pictures of old  
time Dime Novel heroes, such as Buffalo Bill-Pawnee  
Bill-California Joe-etc.-etc., all drawn by Mr. Raw-  
son himself, who is an expert in this kind of "stuff".  
He also has quite a collection of "Boys of New York"-  
Boys Star-and many others, Weeklies and Libraries.

Leaving there at 6 P.M., bound for home, we first  
stopped at a feeding place, to satisfy the inner man,



but this time, it was agreed to have just hot dogs and hamburgers. We arrived at Fisherville at 9 P.M., after nine hours of book hunting, which was a success and a pleasure, with our president. He will take good care of you, you can be sure of that, when crossing the street, or otherwise. In a word, he is a good old-fashioned, good-natured "cuss"; is the ever modest, soft-spoken, rip-roaring "Reckless Ralph" of Roundup fame. If you don't know our President, personally, you have missed something! Could I say more?

(Note: so I'm the rip-roaring, cock-eyed-sarpint of the bad lands, huh? Wait till I see ya agin! I'll hev yer scalp, and I don't mean mobbe! Hee-Haw!)

NEWSY NEWS.

By Ray Caldwell.

About "The Boys' Own" as sent in by Mr. Benner; a few slight corrections: "The Boys' Own" was published by Charles F. Richards, Boston, Mass., and Vol. 1, No. 1 is dated Oct. 11, 1873, and it states that it is to be issued every Monday morning. The first 17 numbers seem to be all English stories. It contains wonderful old woodcut illustrations. The feature story and frontpage picture in No. 1, is "The Dark Corners of London." Two other serials start in the same issue: "The Wandering Boys" or "The Adventures of Bold Ben and Friend Tom"-and-"The Scapegrace of the School" or "Adventures of Dick Lightheart", by the author of "Jack Harkaway's School Days". The last page has a heading, "Salt Water Bubbles No. 1, a short interesting sea story. The "Bubbles" are continued and numbered in each issue from 1 to 35, and in No. 36, the feature is dropped, and the space used for installments of Jules Verne's story, "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea". From No. 1 to 17, the illustrations are either from "Dark Corners of London" or "Scapegrace of the School" (on the covers). In No. 18, a real American story starts: "Red Eagle, the War Chief of the Padoche." This is featured on the cover illustrations at No. 21.



No. 22 features "Jack Ventnor Among the Wharf Rats" by Miss Lottie Brown. The picture on No. 23 is an illustration from "The Wandering Boys" which started in No. 1. No. 24 starts "Dead Man's Rock", or, "The Mysterious Murder". Nos. 25 & 26 features "The Old Grey Jacket", or, "Struggles of a Brave Boy." Nos. 27 to 30 feature "The King of the Prairies", by Hugh Meredith. \* No. 31 starts "Skeleton Island", or, "The Pirates Buried Treasure." In No. 33, "Bart Bowles, the Boot-black" starts, and the author is given as Gus Williams. "The American Star Comique." The front cover shows an autographed picture of Gus Williams. It sure was a wonderful little story paper, size 9 x 12, and the illustrations were fine. In No. 17, was an announcement: "Another new department not now given in any Boys Paper in America. It will be devoted to, and give an epitome of Base Ball Matters." So this was probably the first Baseball Column ever edited, in such a paper... Vol. 1-No. 1 of "The Girls and Boys of America" issued by Munro, was dated Sept. 27, 1873.

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NEWS.

Did you ever get a copy of Ranch Romances, 2nd Feb. number? The story, "Shining Spurs" featured Col. Charles D. Randolph (Buckskin Bill) of H.H.B. No. 103, as a sheriff. A fine story- so be sure to get it!

Charles Bragin, 1525 W. 12th St., Brooklyn, N.Y. announces publication of his "Bibliography of Dime Novels." The work covers the dime novel era from 1860 to 1910, and is illustrated with 32 reproductions. The edition is limited to 250 copies at one dollar each. (Our Charlie has given us all a surprise, in bringing out this fine work on the dime novel.)

Q. Who was Oliver Optic, writer of boys books?  
A. Oliver Optic was the pseudonym of William Taylor Adams, who wrote 126 novels for young people, and over a thousand newspaper stories.

J.S. Ogilvie Publishing Co., 57 Rose St., N.Y.C.



published the "Old Sleuth's Own" and it ran to No. 146 which is the last number. The Parlor Car/Pub. Co., 10-12 Astor Place, N.Y.C. were the original owners of Old Sleuth's Own, and brought out the whole set, but when they sold to Ogilvie, the first 15 numbers were not included in the deal, thru some mistake or other, so Ogilvie started with No. 16.

Jennie Davis Barton wrote for Beadles Saturday Journals. Wonder if she is any relation to our George S. Barton, of H.H.B. ?

Who was Old Sleuth ? Hiram Page Halsey wrote under the name of Old Sleuth; also Louis Herbert. He lived in Brooklyn, N.Y., and was a director of the public schools there.

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BLIZZARD MEN OF 1888..

On Mar. 12th and for a few days following, the eastern United States experienced the worst storm in Weather Bureau history. Many of the old time Dime Novel readers can, no doubt, recall it. Perhaps, on account of being snowbound, they had more time to feast on their favorite Dime Novels. As a member of the "Blizzard Men of 1888" I would be pleased to hear from any Roundup readers who have a story of their experiences with the blizzard, and their Dime Novel reading, at the time. Please write to me, direct:

Thank you, pardners ! G. Fred Orphal-162 Remsen St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

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There were many Ads in the original issue, the largest of which was a full-page Ad entitled: "Cummings' "For Sale" List", featuring the Magnet & New Magnet Libraries. Others were J.P. Guinon-James Madison-Wm. J. Benner-Wm. B. McCafferty-Samuel Olnhausen-Ray Menger-W.C. Miller-S.B. Condon-Harold C. Holmes-L. Morgan-M.E. Bennett-D.S. Learnard-and John T. McIntyre.

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THIS IS A REPRINT.....